

The Bible's Authority

SUPPORTED BY

The Bible's History.

BT
88.5
.G387

C. 12

L. 24.97.

Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Division.....BT
Section.....88.58
Number.....G 387

Shelf.....

THE BIBLE'S AUTHORITY

SUPPORTED BY

THE BIBLE'S HISTORY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

By J. H. GAUSS,

Pastor of the Carondelet Presbyterian Church of St. Louis, Mo.

ST. LOUIS:
PRESS OF BUXTON & SKINNER, 215-221 CHESTNUT ST.
1896.

PREFACE.

WE have felt most deeply that we hold the pen of a novice in this matter of "making a book." For the able assistance of Rev. S. J. Niccolls, D. D., of St. Louis, Mo., in kindly reviewing the manuscript and furnishing an introduction to the little volume, we feel most agreeably indebted.

As may be suspected, "a book" was not the original intention. The request of others has led to the present form. The work has been one rather of collecting than of originating. Its aim has been to place in the busy, everyday man's reach a knowledge of some of the solid though undressed facts from the granite quarry of the world's history concerning the Bible.

A conviction that these facts are commonly unknown, and that in consequence there is a dangerous depreciation of the Bible's authority, led to the undertaking in its original form, with the hope and prayer that these samples would quicken a desire for yet larger acquaintance with *the truths about the Bible*, and so with *the truths in the Bible*.

Such is still our one desire, in the hope of which we commit these pages to the use of Him who has the reader's good much nearer at heart than any human friend.

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

NO cause has been so prolific in book-making as the Bible. If the books that owe their origin, either directly or indirectly, to it were gathered together in one place, they would form the largest library in the world. But the great theme has not been exhausted; the last book concerning the Bible has not been written. It will be as prolific in the literature of the future, as in that of the past. It will continue to hold, with ever increasing interest, the thoughts of men. It will inspire new writers to set forth its doctrines and to record the history of its triumphs.

This little volume from the pen of Rev. Joseph H. Gauss, one of the faithful and laborious pastors in St. Louis, will find a cordial welcome from all who read it, and who are interested in the history of the Bible. It is a demonstration of its authority, and of its rightful claim to be the Word of God. The argument in the book is one that appeals to the honest judgment and common sense of the reader, and it cannot fail to produce conviction. Written in a style that is both interesting and lucid, it is a book for the people, replete with information. Its perusal at this time will help to clear away many misapprehensions with reference to Holy Scripture, and will confirm the faith of those who have been misled by false statements and specious arguments.

SAML. J. NICCOLLS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The Bible's History, or Its Existence from Christ's Day to Our Own: One Evidence of Its Divine Authority.

CHAPTER II.

The Bible's History, or How It Has Come Down to Us: A Second Evidence of Its Divine Authority.

CHAPTER III.

The Bible's History, or Its Influence: A Third Evidence of Its Divine Authority.

CHAPTER IV.

The Bible's History, or Its Contents: A Final Evidence of Its Divine Authority.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIBLE'S HISTORY, OR ITS EXISTENCE FROM CHRIST'S DAY TO OUR OWN: ONE EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE AUTHORITY.

Hebrews 1:1, 2:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

Hebrews 2:3, 4:

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*,

God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

These verses mention the Jewish prophets, the teachings of Jesus, and the testimony of the apostles, which writings practically compose the Bible. Concerning all they declare, "God hath spoken unto us by them." Special importance is attached, and attention urged to all as *the teaching of the Lord*. Hence, we construct this statement, "The Bible the Book from God."

An interval of time between the first report of an event, and the date of its occurrence, cannot but shake our confidence in the reality of its occurrence. For instance, the mere report of an earthquake in our country in the year 1800, as very destructive

of life and property, may interest, but not convince us. We demand the authority for such a report; and naturally expect to find some notice of it by people of that time and some reference to it in history since that time. Failing, we doubt its truthfulness. The effect of such failure is clearly appreciated by a certain class of opponents of the Bible, who have for years been attempting to fix the date of portions of the Old and New Testaments three or four hundred years later than the events they record. If successful, they would show a chasm of time, during which the world, and every part of it, was wholly ignorant of these things. A fact Christianity's defenders would find it hard to explain, and one strongly suggestive of fiction, rather than fact, as Christianity's beginning. Moreover, the Bible allows no such interval. It urges implicit confidence in the New Testament because it is to be traced to those themselves who had heard Jesus, to its very beginning; who, as Peter says, "were eye witnesses;" and John, "handled the Word of Life." If this book is what it claims to be, we must be able to trace it to those through whom it began!

This is the subject we have chosen for this chapter:

The Bible's existence from Christ's day to our own, one evidence of its divine authority.

There are two methods of proceeding: First, to begin at what is supposed to be the time of Christ's life on earth and trace the Bible's existence to our own time; or, second, to begin in our own day and trace the Bible's existence backward till it disappear, or reach the age of Christ and His apostles. There is an advantage in this second method. We begin with events in our own experience and hearing, and so more readily realized. Thus, we become gradually accustomed to, and more able to grasp, facts farther from us.

Our eyes more readily discern an object at a great distance, by resting them first upon others between it and us. There is a German story of some children being treacherously taken from home to be lost in the forest. One, suspecting evil, secretly dropped bits of paper along the road, by means of which they easily found their way home. Instead of trying to discover the beginning at once, let us proceed more gradually, selecting from each century one or two great evidences that, though they have come down to us intact, the pages of this Book of life have existed with the generations of the past.

The 19th.

No one doubts the existence of the Bible to-day. But very few appreciate the magnificent proportions of its existence.

The number of a book's editions is always a high mark of public appreciation. No book on the face of the earth, to-day or any day, has gone through as many editions as the Bible. "It has literally the largest circulation in the world." Its "sales are steadily increasing," and "in proportion to the growth of the population." So says Mr. Henry Froude, of the Oxford Publishing Co., London; and also, "Last year our sales of the Bible were larger than ever before, and that despite the general depression which has greatly affected the book trade."

In "hard times" people do not generally buy books. But they are buying the Bible notwithstanding present hard times. History will certainly say, the Bible was *popular* in the nineteenth century.

The 18th.

One backward step takes us to the age of Newton, Voltaire, Wesley, Whitfield and Carey. Their lives stretch from the beginning to the end of the eighteenth century. Sir Isaac Newton, whose

splendid mind discovered God's law of gravitation, with earnest soul delighted in God's Gospel of salvation. So we learn from Voltaire, the brilliant litterateur and infidel of France and the protege of Frederick William I, of Prussia, pityingly lamenting the withering, stunting effect of the Bible upon the human mind: "Look at the mighty mind of Newton. When he got into his dotage, he began to study the book called the Bible, and it seems, in order to credit its fabulous nonsense we must believe that the knowledge of mankind will be so increased that we shall be able to travel at fifty miles an hour. The poor dotard!" Our opinion as to which was the "dotard" would doubtless be different from Voltaire's. Newton made this assertion upon his study of the books of Daniel and Revelation.

The dry bones of formalism in the churches of England were stirred about the year 50 of the eighteenth century, by the earnest consecration, the tremendous zeal and glowing eloquence of Whitfield and the Wesleys. They warmed the new world of America as well. In reply to an infidel friend's remonstrance, "How, pray you, got this Quixotism into your head, that you leave home and prospects here to fight wind-mills, to convert American savages?" Wesley answered, "If the Bible be not true, I am as very a fool and madman as you can conceive; but if the Bible is of God, I am sober-minded. For he has declared, 'There is no man who hath left house or friends or brethren for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the life to come, everlasting life.'" Then Carey, Sidney Smith's "Consecrated cobbler," a Baptist shoe-maker preacher, whose only virtue, as he himself expressed it, was that he could "plod," by that "plodding" which was inspired by the Bible, translated its words into at least twenty-four

different languages of India. If millions of Methodists to-day thank God for John and Charles Wesley, millions of converted heathen thank God for William Carey.

Newton, Wesley, Carey; the three names stand for the Bible, as a *living* book two hundred years ago, *engaging the brightest minds and stirring the truest hearts.*

The 17th.

We step again, and find ourselves on the wintry and rocky New England coast, by the side of the Pilgrim Fathers in prayer.

Preserved under a stone canopy at Plymouth, Mass., that now world-famous rock still remains. Dr. Thatcher in his history of Plymouth, written soon after the Revolutionary War, relates that in 1741, Elder Faunce, the last ruling elder of the church in Plymouth, learned that a wharf was to be built over the rock. He was carried to the shore and pointed out the rock which his father had assured him was that on which the fore-fathers had landed. Due precautions were then taken to preserve it in sight.

Beyond all question it was the Bible that started those Puritans from their English homes for others where they might worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Kneeling on that rock they held in their hands *another* on which was to arise a new and mighty nation. No more momentous incident is to be found in human history than that embarking of the Puritans at the Hague, Holland. It was the beginning of another and a mighty people. The Book that brought it about surely wielded no little influence over the public mind.

The 16th.

The one name Luther in the hundred years preceding is enough to establish the existence of this interesting Book at that

time. That iron chain that held it was but a symbol of the chain of superstition that held men's minds; the monastic walls that enclosed it but symbols of the walls of ignorance that enslaved men's souls.

But the Word of God of course could not be bound. And in its freedom, it makes men free. Calvin of Geneva, and Knox of Scotland, are other Bible-made men of this century. And of the first says Bancroft, "He that will not honor the memory and respect the influence of Calvin, knows but little of *American* independence." The Puritans, you remember, sought refuge for five years in Geneva, before coming to America. Says Rufus Choate, "I ascribe to that five years in Geneva, an influence which has changed the history of the world."

One other name remains, equally familiar to us with either of these; and though not of prominent church association, yet for this very reason, showing the work of this book in other than ecclesiastical and political lines, Shakespeare. One writer affirms, that in his works there are no fewer than five hundred and fifty quotations from and references to the Bible. "No one of his thirty-seven plays is without a Scriptural quotation or allusion." Surely, any book referred to in a manner so familiar was a book of the common people, who also must have "heard it gladly."

The 15th.

The farthest reaching event of the fifteenth century, was the invention of printing with movable type. We are not surprised to find also at this time a revival of learning in countries of Europe. Learned Greeks emigrated westward when Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks. They brought with them the literature of their own language and their different schools of philosophy. Doubtless these conditions turned men's minds to a quicker and

easier way of making books. But what an indication of the place the Bible held in popular appreciation that we find it among the first, if not the very first book thus printed, about 1450 A. D. Some copies of this edition, though exceeding rare, still exist.

The 14th.

The Reformation culminated, rather than began with Luther. It was harvest, rather than sowing time, in his age. And God raised him up as a leader among the reapers. For there had been sowers before that day; among these, Huss and Jerome of the fifteenth, and Wycliffe, the father of the English Bible, of the fourteenth century.

We find three new things in this century: gun-powder invented in Germany, card-playing introduced in France, the Bible translated in England. It is not difficult for us to decide which was of most importance to the human race. In Italy, Dante's "Divina Comedia" appears at this time, another of the fruits by which the Bible's existence in that day is known.

The 13th.

Our next step confronts us with a fact bearing directly upon our subject, to-wit: "The laity strictly prohibited from reading the Scriptures," as it is stated on Lyman's Historical Chart. When future generations read of the prohibition of alcoholic drinks in Kansas of to-day, should the use of such drinks have been wholly discontinued in our whole land, as God grant it may, the very name *Prohibition* will declare the former existence of that which was prohibited.

We digress for a little to notice the effect of that restriction upon the Bible's use, though we thus anticipate briefly another view of our general subject. This effect is startlingly significant as to the importance of this book to the world's progress. Could you imagine the effect upon the rest of us, should the rulers of our nations succeed

in confining to themselves the light of the sun, it might illustrate the intellectual and moral condition of the world as we find it in the thirteenth century, the closing end of the "Dark Ages," as history calls them, of which time we read, "The laity strictly prohibited from reading the Scriptures."

The societies of Flagellants spread over all Europe. Persons of all ages and ranks, both men and women, ran through the streets of cities and towns, lashing their naked bodies with whips, as a means of securing God's compassion for themselves and others.

Indulgences to commit sins became a large article of trade in the hands of monks.

England was farthest removed from these Italian presumptions and corruptions. As her great Magna Charta of this century shows, she boldly opposed them. But even in England, Roger Bacon, a Franciscan monk, known in after years as the Admirable Doctor, far in advance of his age in philosophy, mathematics, chemistry and the mechanic arts, was imprisoned ten years as a heretic, because of his discoveries and experiments, which were ascribed to magic. Notice: a closed Bible, little understanding, and much superstition. But false as all this was, remember it was practiced as *Christianity*, *Bible-ism*, only the Bible was kept closed.

The 12th.

But of course, such a state of society had not come suddenly. It had been growing for centuries. Really, society was now beginning to improve. The farther back we go for several ages, the blacker the darkness, the denser fanaticism and superstition become. Evidences of the Bible's existence abound, but even before formally prohibited, it was a sealed book to the people, and like the good wheat found with Egyptian mummies, it brought forth no fruit.

The crusades of the twelfth century in which thousands of the flower and chivalry of Europe, tens of thousands of not only men but women, and thousands of children, with a zeal "not according to knowledge," marched as undisciplined hordes, to rescue the Holy City from the Turks, show the power of the New Testament story over the minds and hearts of men in that day.

The 11th and 10th.

We are now reviewing the very darkest ages since the Christian era began. Civil law was with difficulty enforced. Private feuds multiplied exceedingly. Men took vengeance into their own hands. Might made right. The weak suffered; the strong ruled. Society was so utterly disorganized that men called on the Church to stay the evil. This led to the singular organization known as the "Truce of God." Peace associations had been formed before this, in which members bound themselves to protect the defenceless and innocent at all times. But as these with time lost their influence, it was thought advisable to add the influence of religion. In the "Truce of God," it was universally agreed that peace should prevail from sun-set Wednesday to sun-rise Monday, the days specially associated in the popular mind with the sufferings of the Prince of Peace: a very imperfect tribute, but yet how appropriate to the work of Christ; the dim light showing that the eclipse was not total—a reminder of that glowing sun, then overcast, but which to-day has shown out anew, influencing nations to peaceful arbitration rather than bloody destruction.

The 9th.

We have passed the midnight and are approaching the twilight of those dark ages. England through it all was not as be-

nighted as Italy, France and Spain, or even Germany. One reason for this we find in a unique figure of the ninth century who has come down through history as the "Father of his Country," King Alfred the Great. In the midst of an age of Danish oppression and national discouragement that sank the people to barbarism, he maintained his character for learning, patriotism and philanthropy. He built England's first fleet; drove out the invaders, built cities, disciplined an army, established peace, security and public honesty; encouraged agriculture, the arts and the instruction of his people. In him we come to another of those associations of the Bible with public progress and prosperity, to be found like pillars of grateful praise all along this journey through the centuries. His patriotic wish has been frequently quoted, "That all the freeborn youth of this kingdom should employ themselves on nothing till they could first read the English *Scripture*,"—English writing, this literally is, and does not *necessarily* mean the Christian Bible. But judge as to Alfred's *probable* meaning, not only from his being a translator of the Bible, but from that document with which he began his laws of England, "Alfred's Dooms," "The dooms which the Almighty himself spake to Moses, and gave him to keep, and after our Savior Christ came to earth, He said, he came not to break or forbid, but to keep them." And then follow the Ten Commandments, *the first part of the ancient laws of England!!* To him "English Scripture" meant English *Bible*. And Queen Victoria showed historical accuracy as well as religious fervor, when handing the African Prince a copy of the Bible, she said "This is the secret of England's greatness."

The 8th and 7th.

The historical events of the eighth and seventh centuries are almost, if not altogether, wholly associated with the struggle against

Mohammedan rule. The Saracens, taking their name from "Sarah" the wife of Abraham, had been victorious in the East; Constantinople had fallen; northern Africa likewise; European Spain was actually in their hands; ancient France was suffering from their presence. The liberties and religion of Europe were at stake; and that religion was Christianity. The battle of Poitiers, which won for Charles of France the title "Martel," the Hammer, saved for Europe and the western world self-government instead of a Sultan's despotism, Christianity instead of Mohammedanism, the *Bible* instead of the Koran. What the difference is, we need but go—or indeed only read our daily telegraphic news, and see. "Armenian Outrages" are not expected in Europe, England or America. But each of these has inherited the Bible from, not originated the Bible since, that day.

The 6th.

We step to another event that has fixed *the world's computation of time*, and again find an impress of this old Book's existence, "The Christian Era." We know this lacks four years of being correct. The reason is, that it was not adopted until five hundred years after the event from which it dates occurred. A. U. C. had for 1300 years been the prevailing abbreviations for marking time, since Romulus laid out the city of Rome. But this was not in universal use. And that western nations might unite on some one era, a humble monk in 527, computed the years since the birth of Jesus. And behold, the whole civilized world, even to Japan, and soon apparently, it will be China also, is writing, A. D., "In the year of our Lord," and B. C., "Before Christ."

The 5th.

We are within four steps, four hundred years of that "Era." In the years of the fifth century we meet the barbarian hordes of the north and east over-running the countries of southern Europe. Attila, the Hun, "The scourge of God," ravages Europe. Genseric, the Vandal, plunders Rome. The Western Empire falls. But not the Western Empire's *religion*. Among others, the French nation takes its start under a heathen conqueror of the soil, himself to be, in the person of his descendants, conquered by the religion of the soil. Before the century closes, his fourth successor has wedded Clotilda, a Christian princess, and adopted her religion. "With Clovis," says the historian, "commences the glory of the religion, laws and usages of the French." Had he not better said, "With Clotilda"? For from her Clovis got France's religion. And she got it from the Bible.

The 4th.

Just as we cross the line from the fifth to the fourth centuries, we meet the great issue between Paganism and Christianity. The reported words of Julian the Apostate, Christian by baptism but Pagan in devotion, tell the story. Though they may not have been spoken by the dying Emperor, they might well be put into the mouth of stricken Idolatry, "Ah, Galilean, Thou hast conquered."

Christianity, and of course this means Christianity's Sacred Book, was high in royal position in this century. Though the exaltation was a dangerous temptation to its followers; though the story of the luminous cross, with the words "In hoc signo vinces," be but a tradition; that Constantine made Christianity the religion of the state, which included with the exception of Persia the whole then known world, is the most unquestionable history.

3rd and 2d.

A scarlet stream runs through the next two hundred years. The heart actually sickens as we read the record of the ten persecutions bringing us down to the days of the aged Apostle John. Argument, sword, fire and wild beasts were employed to their utmost, to stamp out the "heresy." The exact number of converts to Christianity who sealed their faith with their blood is not known. Gibbon endeavors to reduce it to a very small figure. But in this he was betrayed through partiality against Christianity, as were early historians betrayed into exaggeration through partiality for it. The famous letter of Pliny II makes it plain that the number was by no means small. He was confounded by the great number and the character of those whom the edict of the Emperor Trajan would compel him to put to death. Women and children as well as men were among them; "in whom with the exception of refusing to sacrifice, he found nothing criminal; they rose with the sun (on the first day of the week), sang to Christ as God; and for the purpose of keeping their discipline, prohibited adultery, murder, overreaching, fraud and all like crimes; and in all things acted according to the law." So wrote Pliny, who was born in the year 61, A. D., and died in 115, A. D. Here are Christians and Christian character,—here is the Bible in existence *less than one hundred years after Christ's crucifixion*; and let us repeat, associated with the same ennobling characteristics in its followers, that we have found all through the nineteen centuries we have retraced.

1st.

Polycarp, eighty years bishop of Smyrna, that one of the seven churches addressed through John in Revelation, to which alone no word of rebuke is spoken, suffered martyrdom in 166, having been a

Christian eighty-six years. This makes his conversion in the year 80, and strikingly confirms his statement of *personal acquaintance with John*, by whom and the other apostles he had been instructed, and whom *he had heard* relate the words and describe the works of Christ.

We are at our journey's end. Through different ages, strange lands, among strange people we have come. In an early age, a strange land, among a strange people we pause. One object we find, as we found it all along the way, grandly familiar, *the Christian Bible*. Surely, the opinion that it "began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him," has the merit of age, unbroken by any perplexing silence of time.

However, the mere age of any opinion is not unmistakable evidence of its truth. The opinion that the earth was flat prevailed three thousand years. Nevertheless, the reasoning and actual experiment of the venturesome Spaniard, effectually shattered it. But the age of an opinion's continued spreading and influential acceptance is an evidence, which certainly demands every honest mind's most thoughtful attention. And such growth and influence we have surely found true of the opinion that *the Bible is the Book from God*.

After what we have read, no one will have patience to listen to such folly as that this story of Jesus and the Apostles is a symbolical representation of the Sun and the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Nor can any be satisfied with Strauss' explanation that it is only a beautiful myth. Myths *grow* from age to age. Each generation makes some *addition* to the fancy. But here is a simple tale, simply told, of which we can say as it says of its Hero, it is the same to-day as yesterday, the same now as then. Surely, this is *history*.

This, for the *New* Testament's Divine beginning. But remember, the Jesus to whom we have traced the testimony of the New Testament authors, lays His hand of approval upon the *Old* Testament writers as well; and thus with His word of authority and heart of love, links them together as one. The *whole* Book stands or falls with the historical reality of Jesus Christ. And that most surely stands.

One word in conclusion: Intellectual conviction is not the end of this matter. If we are to profit by it, there must be heart acceptance. "The dying of Jesus believed with the heart makes us ashamed to do wrong, makes us wish to do right"; convinces us of love from God, and awakens love for God. This is the power of the Gospel of Jesus in our hearts and in His world. Let us yield to it.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE'S HISTORY, OR HOW IT HAS COME DOWN TO US:

A SECOND EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE AUTHORITY.

Luke 1:3:

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus.

II. Corinthians 3:2, 3:

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

II. John 12:

Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

II. Timothy 4:13:

The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments.

In the previous chapter we retraced the course of nineteen centuries from last to first. In this we shall follow those same centuries from first to last, though not so strictly one by one.

THE BIBLE'S BEGINNING.

Its contrast here with other bibles or sacred books is very significant.

"On a hill, near Palmyra, N. Y., Joseph Smith, under an angel's instructions, as we are told, found the golden plates, on which were engraved the wonderful records to-day constituting the Book of Mormon."

Again, the first writing of the Koran, or Mohammedan Bible, was, as they say, before Creation in rays of light, upon a gigantic tablet resting by the throne of the Almighty. A copy in a book bound in white silk, jewels and gold, was brought down to the lowest heaven by the angel Gabriel. During twenty-three years portions of it were communicated to Mohammed. He dictated them to a scribe. Copies were made by his followers, unless they preferred learning the oracles by heart, from the master's own mouth. A year after Mohammed's death the scattered portions were collected from date leaves, tablets of white stone, bones and parchment leaves, and the breasts of men, and faithfully copied.

But the New Testament's first appearance, how different! as stated by St. Paul, in II Corinthians 3:2 and 3, *in the form of holy lives*: "Ye are the epistles of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God in fleshy tables of the heart." Remember how this was confirmed by Pliny of that same day, who shrank from killing for their faith in Christ, citizens who were exemplary for their *piety, morality* and *loyalty*.

In the years immediately following the crucifixion of Christ there were no New Testament writings. The apostles gave themselves to preaching their message. At the very beginning they were heralds, rather than scribes. That they did write, however, is plainly declared by such passages as II. John 12, and II. Tim. 4:13. The occasion of their writing was most commonplace, to wit: the natural need for written accounts. First, as Peter says, that "After his decease, men might have these things always in remembrance;" second, as we learn in Romans 1:13, to extend the teaching to those to whom they were as yet unable to go; third, as we read in Luke 1:3, that men might "know the certainty," possess a reliable account, of the

things of Jesus. So they wrote; and also under circumstances equally commonplace: Christians have "no wondrous golden plates" as Mormonism furnishes, no magnificent books as Mohammedanism describes, no tables sprinkled with sand to be written upon by unseen power, as the Chinese believe;—one and all only to excite popular superstition and veneration. But quite the contrary, the original writings of the apostles are actually *lost*; no trace of the paper and ink John used, of the parchment on which Paul wrote, appears after the following generation. They relied upon their acknowledged relation with Christ for their authority with men's minds and hearts. They were much more concerned for the doctrine itself they left with the world, than for the papyri and parchment upon which it was written. *Nor has the Church ever needed those autographs of the apostles*, beyond to know that such there were.

The Bible's great superiority to the other sacred books of the world shows itself also in the very character of its appeal: knocking at the doors of our hearts, not to awaken superstitious awe, but to inform unprejudiced reason; not dwelling upon material circumstances, but resting upon actual occurrences. Well known is the tendency of the human heart to worship any thing, in the slightest manner associated with God. There is a rock just outside the garden of Gethsemane, upon which tradition says Jesus leaned when he offered the prayer in the seventeenth of John. Only a tradition; and yet pilgrims flock thither by thousands. The Bible does not come to be worshipped by, but welcomed into the human heart, and wisely have its inspired originals been allowed to disappear.

But that there were such originals we have the most unmistakable testimony, not only from texts we might quote from the Book as it is in our hands to-day, but from other writings of that same day and immediately after.

The faithful old martyr-bishop of Smyrna, in 166 A. D., had been a Christian, according to his own confession, 86 years. He must therefore have been converted in 80 A. D., at most, but fifty years after Christ's ascension. We have a copy of a letter from him to the Philippians; another from his *predecessor* at Smyrna, Ignatius, to the Ephesians. This Ignatius wrote to the church at Rome: "All the ends of the world and the kingdom of it, will profit me nothing. I would rather die for Jesus Christ than rule to the utmost end of the earth. Him I seek who died for us: Him I desire that rose again for us;" again to the Philadelphian Christians he wrote, "I exhort you that you do nothing out of strife, but according to the instruction of Christ. Because I have heard of some who say, 'Unless I find it written in the originals, I will not believe it to be in the Gospels.'" Here the "originals" are actually called such.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, was a pupil of Polycarp who succeeded this man Ignatius. He died a martyr, thirty-six years after his master, 202 A. D. In a letter preserved by a historian not two hundred years later, he writes of his childhood experience: "I can recall the very place where Polycarp used to sit and teach; his frequent references to St. John and others who had seen our Lord, how he used to repeat from memory their discourses concerning our Lord, His miracles and teachings; and how, being instructed by those who were eye-witnesses of the Word, there was in all that he said a strict agreement with the Scriptures." Here there are *spoken* accounts of Jesus compared with the Scriptures, or *written* accounts.

Justin Martyr of this same century, whose very name shows how his life ended, wrote two defenses of Christianity, one in 139, the other in 161 A. D. In the first of these we read, "Christ has said, 'Except ye are born again ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'" He tells us that the "memoirs" of the apostles were *read* after the prophets every Lord's day in the assemblies of Christians. Here we

have the *apostles* of the New and the *prophets* of the Old Testament, both read in public worship before 150 A. D.

These are but four of the men of these first one hundred years after the apostles, whose writings have come down to us. We have noticed only their allusions to the writings of the apostles. Time would fail us utterly to give a list of their *quotations* from these writings, so numerous that it has been said should our Bible disappear, almost the whole of the four gospels could be recovered from them alone.

But let us pause to ask which *are* the writings of the apostles? or what books constitute the Bible? 'Tis well known that the Church of Rome endorses books, "apocryphal," that our Bible does not contain. The answer to this question must of course come from that same early age. So it does; and in a manner that cannot but greatly increase our confidence in the judicious earnestness of those early Christians.

We have different lists of the books of the Bible between the years 150 and 350. An Italian scholar, Muratori, of the last century, discovered one, that from a mention of Pius as Bishop of Rome, we know to be not later than his day, 157 A. D. Some books were then falsely claiming a place in the authoritative list, and were being rejected; for example, a gospel of Luke by one Marcion, of 150 A. D. Some lists had books now accepted, that others had not. But all lists had the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The historian Eusebius, of about 300 A. D., gives us a list which contains the books of our Bible, *and no others*; but with this remarkable distinction among them, to wit, that while Christians everywhere were agreed upon twenty of them, which he therefore called "*Homologoumena*," *acknowledged*; there were seven, Hebrews, James, 2d Peter, 2d and

3d John, Jude, and Revelation, which some did not accept, and which he therefore called "Antilegomena," *spoken against*. Before the end of that century, however, all of the New Testament's twenty-seven books were accepted as inspired.

This shows us how cautious those early believers were. They were not rash and impulsive. Only after two hundred years did they give their assent to the books we now have, and then to those alone, though others also of excellent character were in their hands.

The reason for the early difference of opinion concerning those seven books is very natural. The Christian religion had spread largely over the then known world. Irenaeus was a pupil of Polycarp in Asia Minor, but became a bishop of a church in Gallia, or modern France, the whole length of the Mediterranean Sea stretching between them. Means of communication were very far from being what they are to-day. A church in Western Asia might hold a book of which a church in Northern Africa had never heard, and for which it knew no apostolic authority and would very properly refuse to recognize until it had learned its credentials. These were in time furnished for all the seven. But the unanimous acceptance was not attained by any miraculous event, such as is related from the council of Nice, when *all* books claiming a place in the Scripture, it is said, were placed under the communion table, and after prayer the inspired ones were found uppermost, the apocryphal underneath. There was no more reliance upon superstition in *selecting* than there had been in *writing* the books. Reasonable evidence was to prove the apostolic authority of each: as it has done. Since the year 400 A. D. the thirty-nine books of the O. T., sanctioned by Jesus Christ's use and approval, and the twenty-seven of the N. T. have been invariably accepted by all forms of Christianity. If the Roman and Greek churches hold others, they also maintain these.

TRANSLATIONS.

But the Bible existed in still other forms than in the apostles' autographs and copies of them for use in the different churches. We have intimated how rapidly Christianity spread in those first two centuries. It may help us to be reminded that we have to-day two translations of it, in Syriac and in Latin, which the soberest and most conservative scholars date not later than 150 A. D. Of course there must have been originals from which these were made.

This "Old Latin" translation was used in northern Africa along the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea for two hundred years, after which time there was a demand for a smoother version, one better suited to the higher culture of Italy. The Bishop of Rome persuaded Jerome, who had just returned from his hermitage at Bethlehem, Judea, to undertake this work. He did so, thus completing the first *revision* of the New Testament, in 385 A. D. The Old Testament he not merely revised but translated from the original Hebrew. The whole was known as the "Vulgate;" and "for more than a thousand years was the parent of every version of the Scriptures in western Europe."

From this a famous Anglo-Saxon scholar in 735 translated the Gospel into the language of his people. "I don't want my boys to read a lie, or to work to no purpose after I am gone," are his words. He was now old and on his death-bed, and though his devoted pupils begged him to rest, he continued his work: "Ascension Day had dawned; he commanded us to write with all speed. 'There remains but one chapter, master, but it seems very hard for you to go on.' 'Nay, it is easy, take up thy pen and write quickly.' Weeping, the young man wrote on. 'And now, father, only one sentence remains.' The old man gave it. 'It is finished, master,' cried the youth, as the

last word of the gospel of John was written. 'Aye, it is finished,' repeated the dying Christian; 'lift me up, place me at the window of my cell where I have so often prayed to my God. Now glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.' With these words the soul of Baeda Venerabilis passed into the presence of Christ."

In the six hundred years that followed, England was in a state of turmoil. Alfred the Great, "Father of his Country," had not only given the Ten Commandments to his people, but was translating the gospels when he died. But Danes, Saxons and Normans had struggled for the ascendancy. Out of Normans and Saxons had sprung a new people, and from their speech, a new language. The old Saxon of Baeda's day was no longer intelligible. English was the language of the land and a new language in the world. And now again from Jerome's Latin Bible an old priest translated it. He died from a stroke of apoplexy received the last Sunday of 1384 A. D., during service with his little excommunicated flock at Lutterworth, on the river Swift, where in a handsome church to-day, is still preserved a part of his old pulpit. The pope of that day, to his credit be it said, refused a petition praying that his body be taken out of consecrated ground and buried in a dunghill. But forty years later, by decree of the council of Constance, his bones were burnt and their ashes scattered on the surface of the little river that ran by his Church. We recall the words of Fuller: "As the Swift bare them into the Severn and the Severn into the narrow seas, and they again into the ocean, thus the ashes of Wycliffe are an emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed over all the world." And this was his doctrine: "The sacred Scriptures are the property of the people. Christ and his apostles converted the world by making known the Scriptures in a

form familiar to them. And I pray with all my heart, that through doing the things contained in this book we may all come together to everlasting life."

We must not forget, that all this work up to this time was done by hand. Consequently copies were both rare and expensive. Nevertheless Wycliffe's Bible was circulated largely. Some were able to purchase, others to rent, and yet others in companies secured a hearing. "A considerable sum was paid for even a few sheets. A load of hay for permission to read it for a certain period one hour a day. Others, like one Alice Collins, were sent for to little gatherings, to recite the Ten Commandments, or parts of the epistles of Paul and Peter."

But the next century's invention of printing was to make a great change in the quantity and price of all books, the Bible among the number. The immigration of the Greeks from the east into Europe not only revived learning, but as has been noticed, bore directly on the history of the Bible. Their language, for the sake of their literature, became a study in the universities. And a part of that literature was the New Testament. Unknown to the world of the west for centuries, "Greece," it has been said, "rose from the grave with the New Testament in her hand." This, of course, gave translators of the Bible another source of authority beside the Vulgate or Latin of Jerome, itself only a revision of a translation. Another Englishman, William Tyndale, born just one hundred years after Wycliffe's death, was made indignant by the contemptuous reply of some priests whom he was urging to study the Scriptures in the face of the pope's prohibition: "We had better be without God's laws, than the Pope's." Said Tyndale, "If God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives the plow in England to know more Scripture than the Pope does." And he did it; at least, he put the Scripture

within the plow-boy's reach. However, he had to leave England in order to do it; settling first in Harburg, then in Luther's city, Worms. But from thence, in a few years, in cases, barrels, bales of cloth, sacks of flour and by other secret ways, the "dangerous merchandise" was sent back to England. And notwithstanding the greatest vigilance to prevent it by burning it and even those who received it, many English Bibles were scattered over the country. Tyndale was at last in old age betrayed by a pretended friend, brought back to England, strangled at the stake, and then burned while he prayed, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." But the light of the truth could no longer be obscured. Revisions and translations now followed every few years. The eyes of England's rulers *were* "opened" sufficiently to lead them, with the exception of Bloody Mary, to encourage the philanthropic work of scattering the word of truth. Three years after Tyndale's death the so-called "Great Bible" was to be found in every church. It had a curious frontispiece thus described: "In the first compartment is a picture of God, in the clouds, with outstretched hands. Two scrolls proceed from his mouth, on one is written, 'The word which goeth forth from me shall not return to me empty, but shall accomplish whatsoever I will have done;' on the other addressed to the king, Henry VIII, kneeling bareheaded in the distance, 'I have found me a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfill all my will.' The King is answering, 'Thy word is a lantern unto my feet.' In the next compartment, seated on his throne, the king has a Bible in his hand, giving one to the priests, with the words, 'Take and teach,' the other to the nobility and judges, saying 'I make a decree that in all my kingdom men shall tremble and fear before the living God,' a scroll falls over his own feet with the words 'Judge righteous judgment.' In the third compartment bishops and judges are distributing Bibles to the priests and laymen; a preacher is in his pulpit, with the text, 'I exhort that prayer and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings,' at which

the people appear shouting 'Vivat Rex,' and children who knew no Latin, saying: 'God save the King.' At the extreme left, a prisoner at his barred windows is sharing in the delight as though he, too, were delivered from a worse than material bondage."

REVISED VERSIONS.

The English Bible was from that day assured to the English speaking people. In 1607 the Authorized Version under James I was begun. There were really three different English translations in use at the time. The Puritan party suggested a new translation on which the whole nation should unite. Forty-seven of the ablest scholars were selected. Says a modern writer: "No doubt can be entertained as to the ability and acquirements of the revisers." They divided themselves into six companies. One writer gives this graphic description of them at their work: "That part of the Bible was given to him most excellent in such a tongue, and then they met together, and one read the translation, the rest holding in their hands some Bible—either of the learned tongues, or French, Spanish, Italian, etc. If they found any fault, they spoke; if not, he read on. A portion thus gone over was sent to the others for approval, and then to the committee on final revision, through whose hand every chapter and verse passed before the printers received it. After four years and nine months it was completed, 'a hard, heavy, but holy task.'" One suggests that they had the spirit of Augustine's prayer "O, let the Scriptures be my pure delight, let me not be deceived in them, neither let me deceive by them." "The English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world, and renders the sense of the original best." Such is the opinion of a prominent lawyer. And even a Roman Catholic divine, Dr. Geddes, declares "If accuracy and strictest attention to the letter of the text be supposed to constitute

an excellent version, this is of all versions most excellent." And this is our English Bible of to-day. But the real excellency of it is yet to appear through the late second great Revision of the Scriptures.

It is now 280 years old. In these years great advance has been made in the discovery and study of old manuscripts. Since those days we have at Rome, London, and St. Petersburg, three Greek parchments that all scholars, friendly and unfriendly to the Christian religion, agree in dating in the years 350 to 400 after Christ. The most recently discovered of these is the Sinaitic, which a German Christian scholar, Dr. Tischendorf, found by accident in a waste paper basket in the monastery on Mt. Sinai, Arabia. "Several such basketsful have been thrown into the fire," said the ignorant librarian. Dr. Tischendorf recognized its value at a glance, but imprudently exposed his eagerness to the monk, who suspecting that they were of more worth than he had imagined, withheld all but some forty sheets that the Dr. had at first secured. And it was only after fifteen years of diplomacy, first through one, then through another ruling power, and finally through the Czar of Russia, that this important relic came at last into the hands of Christian scholars. Besides these three there are some fifteen hundred other different manuscripts of the Bible. These as well as different ancient and earlier *translations* of the Bible, such as the old Latin and the Syriac, and writings of the fathers of the age following the apostolic, have come to the knowledge and use of scholars since the Authorized Version was completed.

To say nothing of the changes that occur in a language in two hundred years, new words forming, old words becoming obsolete, this grand opportunity for comparing the English Bible of to-day with the Bible fifty to seventy-five years after Paul's and John's day, the very Bible of Polycarp's day, should certainly be improved. Such was the reasoning that led to the revision of the English Bible a few years ago.

To appreciate the advantages in such a number of witnesses, let us consider two things: first, that of other ancient writings, such as Homer's *Illiad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Josephus' *Antiquities*, Manetho's *History of Egypt*, we have at most fifty, perhaps still fewer different copies; and second, that the large number of early copies of the Bible were each made as those early English translations, by hand, not by printing presses so that one would reproduce the error of another. While every person is liable to make mistakes in such a work as copying by hand, not many are likely to make the same mistakes. This leaves each copy a check on the others. Examination of these fifteen hundred copies discovered some 800,000 different readings, but about 795,000 are of no more importance to the sense than in English are the different ways of spelling "honor," or "honour." Of the remaining 5,000 we will speak in summing up the result of the recent revisers' work.

Men of high scholarship were selected, beginning the work June 29th, 1870, and after fifteen years of careful and prayerful labor, the complete Revised Version was in the hands of the public. What was the result? Out of the seven hundred and ninety-one thousand, four hundred and forty-four different readings in the whole book, 721,671 were judged to *need no change*. And by the changes in the others not a single *doctrine* is changed. Have we then the inspired Word of God? *Literally*, word for word, No. Those autographs of the inspired apostles of course were; but they disappeared some eighteen hundred years ago. *Practically*, however, Yes. The truest scientific criticism, which moreover the Book itself has erected, fully vindicates its claim to be the teaching of the apostles of Jesus, who learned from Him "the *words* of Everlasting Life."

Thus has the Book stood the wear of time: its facts and doctrines more fixed and not in the least faded by age! At Elizabeth's

coronation pageant, an old man representing Time appeared, and by his side a maiden representing Truth, the daughter of Time. In her hand she brought an English Bible, with the words "Verbum Veritatis," the Word of Truth. The new queen received it with external emotion and gratitude. Would that she had taken its teachings into her heart, as she pressed the volume to her bosom. So let us receive it.

There is something beautiful, yet terrible, in the sun; its brilliant brightness. There is something beautiful, yet terrible, in Truth; its calm invincibility. Is not this what we have found in these old writings? How these Scriptures have lived in the face of ignorant neglect and even bitter hatred and willful perversion. Sword nor flame nor flood has destroyed or even moved the "Impregnable Rock," as Mr. Gladstone has called them. Surely he is wise who builds his hope on, and rules his life by, this Book. Let us be "wise."

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE'S HISTORY, OR ITS INFLUENCE:

A THIRD EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE AUTHORITY.

Matthew 7:20:

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

The redoubtable Christian, Chaplain McCabe, has imagined this state of society: A certain prominent infidel determined to found a separate community from which Christians, churches and the Bible were to be rigidly excluded; he and his would go to themselves. And lo, the result: the remainder of our country rejoices with no saloons, empty jails, low taxes, increasing commerce, and prosperous schools, as well as full churches.

A Christian woman records her awakening to the needs of the heathen world, in the form of a vision: A Hindoo woman passed through her home, and with a gnarled stick, representing heathendom, obliterated as by touch of a magic wand, all traces of Christianity. Literature, music, art, and social equality with her own husband and sons, disappeared before her astonished gaze.

James Russell Lowell, indignant at the slurring remarks of some unbelieving fellow-scientists, rose and replied, "When the microscopic search of scepticism has found a spot on this planet ten miles square, where a decent man can live in decency, comfort and security, where the Gospel of Christ has not laid the founda-

tions, it will then be in order for the sceptical literati to move thither, and there ventilate their views."

Such are the known claims Christians make for their religion's influence. It is but just to demand that they support them from history.

More than this, we have equally positive assertions and promises in this their Sacred Book, Old and New Testament alike: "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." Ps. 74:20. "The entrance of thy word giveth light." Ps. 119:130. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." Matt. 13:33. And again, "Beware of false prophets. By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7:20. Here we have the promises of the Bible's effect, and also, the principle for testing their fulfillment, namely, by actual results, "by their fruits ye shall know them." Such investigation the Bible invites. If it is from God it must be proper and just to reverently put it to the test of

ITS OWN INFLUENCE IN THE PAST 1900 YEARS.

This is our present subject. We last considered how the Bible has come down to us. We will now look at what the Bible has done for us. Says Dr. C. H. Parkhurst, "I am interested in the people who made the Bible, but I am more interested in the people whom the Bible makes, for they show me the fibre and genius of Scripture as no mental studiousness or verbal exegesis can do." At the people with whom the Bible has come in contact, let us look; at society in which the leaven has been "hid;" the trees growing where the Bible has struck root. What do we find? Let not colored glasses of prejudice cover our sight, whether we be favorable or unfavorable to the Book. Recognized authorities are the witnesses we

seek and we must receive them from the ranks of foes as well as friends.

In this spirit we proceed.

Let us turn toward the European continent and the German forests, and again listen to Mr. Gibbon: "The progress of Christianity has been marked by two glorious and decisive victories: over the learned and luxurious citizens of the Roman Empire, and over the warlike barbarians of Scythia and Germany. The Goths were the foremost of these savage proselytes. Of the (Roman) captives (taken by Goths) many were Christians, (who) labored for the salvation of their masters. Before the end of a century Ulphilas, bishop and apostle of the Goths, acquired their love and reverence by his blameless life and zeal, and they received the doctrines of truth and virtue, which he preached and practiced. He translated the Scriptures into their language, prudently suppressing the four books of Kings, as they might irritate the sanguinary spirit of the barbarians. The rude language, ill-qualified to communicate any spiritual ideas, was improved. But before he could frame his version, Ulphilas was obliged to compose a new alphabet of 24 letters, four of which he himself invented."

The gods Thor (from which we have named our day Thursday) and Woden (our day Wednesday) were the deities of the people and their devotees contended by persecution for the worship of the nation. But as Mr. Gibbon says, "The harmless barbarians multiplied in obscure peace and the profession of Christianity."

But to be more specific, we will turn to "The learned and luxurious citizens of the Roman Empire" before these fierce Goths swooped down upon them, but over whom, as we have just quoted Mr. Gibbon, Christianity had already gained a "decisive and glorious victory."

The union of the Christian Church and the political state under Constantine, 325 A. D., has much in it to be regretted; the simplicity of Christian worship was gradually replaced by regal pomp and material splendor; distinction in church offices acquired more importance, and humility and brotherly familiarity unavoidably gave way to social caste. Nevertheless, this union furnishes an advantage to us in our investigation. It placed the principles of the Bible in a responsible and conspicuous position, and also secured the record of their influence in public state documents and civil laws. When young Edward VI was crowned in England, three swords were handed him, as signs of his power over three Kingdoms. He asked for one more, the Bible, "the sword of the Spirit," to be preferred, as he said, before all the others. That Book was taken to his throne, if not to his heart, by Constantine the Great. And we, of right, expect to find traces of it in his legislation.

THE BIBLE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

The existence of a *Sunday Law* in 321 A. D. beautifully accords with such expectation. Later in 457, from Emperor Leo we read, "We make this day a day of repose but we do not wish that obscene pleasure should fill it." Plato had said, that leisure was necessary to virtue, and therefore, no working man could acquire virtue. The Bible on the throne provided and preserved such leisure, especially for working men. As it began it has ever continued, the Book of and for the "common people."

Let us consider the "common people" in those days. They were slaves. An idea of their vast numbers can be had from the failure of a bill in the Roman Senate, providing for a distinctive dress for bond-men. It was feared it would thus be manifest that slaves outnumbered free-men. As to their condition, one instance out of many

must suffice. Tacitus tells us of a wealthy Roman who had pledged freedom to a slave, but breaking his promise was assassinated by him. It was the law that all slaves under the same master should be executed with the one convicted. The case was discussed in the Senate. The celebrated Cassius pleaded for the enforcement of the law. He was successful, and all the innocent slaves, in number 600, were executed with the one guilty. The popular school declamation, "Spartacus to the Gladiators," remind us how this same class was made to serve popular amusement. True, some, like Cicero and Tacitus, had raised their voices against the cruelty of the amphitheater. But Caesar had 320 pairs on the bloody sand at one time; and the virtuous Trajan, 100 A. D., had 10,000 prisoners and gladiators to fight in 123 days.

Christian teachers proclaimed against the barbarous practice. Augustine, in 400 A. D. tells of one Christian compelled by his family to go to the show. He sat with covered eyes until a shout from the populace betrayed him to look, but then immediately became as fierce as the rest, and from thenceforth he was an outcast from the Church. Constantine himself the very year before espousing the cause of Christianity, put a large number of prisoners with wild beasts in the amphitheater and glutted the people with blood. But in 321, when Christianity came into power, we find a law making the mutilation of a slave's body homicide; in 325 another, ordering that all gladiators be prohibited from carrying on their profession. Such legislation continued during the ages that followed. Theodosius in 379, Justinian in 527, repeat and enlarge upon it. In the 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th and 15th centuries, we continue to find such enactments. Thirty-seven church councils have passed acts favorable to slaves. In 656 any slave compelled to work on Sunday, or baptized, became free. This last idea, that baptism made

one free, existed even to the days of our American colonies. Two acts of the Virginia Colonial Assembly were necessary to assure owners that baptism should not disturb their rights.

One question doubtless here occurs to every one. Why has not Christianity abolished slavery absolutely? The answer leads us to another wofully sad fact in society under the Roman Empire, *infanticide and child exposure*; and also explains what cannot but strike any reader of church history as very strange, to wit, that there are acts of church councils expressly *permitting* slavery during these same years of *manifest opposition* to it. The contradiction and inconsistency is, however, only seeming. It is an indisputable fact that Roman families exposed their infant children, when deformed or girls, to perish, to be devoured, or taken up by shameless souls, for vile lives even worse than death. Quintillian, Pliny, and Seneca, reveal this in their writings. Says Seneca, "It is not anger but reason, thus to separate the useless from the sound." In theatrical plays this practice appears as the turning point in the plots. In one, the same character who says, "I am a man, and nothing of man is foreign to me," is a father who rebukes his wife for exposing instead of destroying a little daughter born during his absence from home. "What did you propose to do? You would have abandoned your daughter to that old witch to make her a slave or prostitute." Now the reason for this awful inhumanity is found in *the unprecedented poverty* that prevailed. Caesar found 320,000, three-fourths of the whole population of Rome, on the roll of public succor. Under Augustus, 200,000 were receiving "out-door relief" from the authorities. To encourage the increase of children he gave 400 sesterces, \$41.00, to any who had supported a family. This shows that the heathen themselves were awakening to the suicidal destructiveness of this inhumanity. Trajan supported 5,000

destitute children at public expense. Pliny endowed a similar charity, as did also emperors during the second century. Bequests from private citizens, one of \$16,000, another of \$40,000, are on record for such beneficence. A beautiful epitaph describes one woman as "The mother of all human beings, ready to help all, and who had made the life of no one sad." However, these were but exceptions; and the evil continued. But in a letter from the Apostate Julian, the emperor who had determined to restore the waning power of paganism, we read "the Galileans support not only their own poor, but also the Romans." This was after Constantine, since whose day we find aggressive laws against this inhumanity. In 321 A. D. he decreed, "We have learned that inhabitants of provinces suffering from scarcity of food, sell and put in pledge their children. We command that those be succored by our treasury." In 325, the council of Nice ordered the building of hospitals. In 442, we find rules for receiving abandoned children. Depots for such purposes were provided at different points, which, sad to say, were in later centuries subjected to shameful abuse. In the sixth century, the Emperor Justinian enacted that an abandoned infant, if a slave, became free by that act. In Europe, in the eighth century, besides those who had perished through abandonment, great numbers of children were *sold*. So that the pope was constrained thus to remonstrate, "Let us imitate our Divine Redeemer's example in freeing from slavery the men who are free by the laws of nature."

But the poverty that caused this awful heathen selfishness, also hindered Christian helpfulness that might otherwise have adopted the abandoned children. For Christians were themselves from the poorest classes. Consequently Constantine in 331, had to enact a law leaving it *optional* to adopt or keep as a slave, a little one taken up. While this explains the slowness of Christianity's extinction of

slavery, it also shows the tendency of its influence, which, surely, though slowly, is spreading the truth all men equal, are equal before God.

A good idea of *the need of new views of life* in those days of the Roman Empire, may be formed from the reproach popularly cast upon Christians, as followers of the son of a working mother, "*operariae matris.*" We, to-day, know what nobility the simple fact that Jesus was a carpenter has thrown around the artisan class.

Space, but also propriety, forbids our going minutely into the condition of woman and the family in the Roman Empire. Seneca speaks of "daily divorces;" of women of social standing, who reckoned their years by *the number of their husbands*. He describes woman as "*Animal imprudens, ferum, cupiditatum, impatiens*" (a foolish creature, wild, unable to control her lusts). Cicero divorced one wife to marry another, and thus secure a dower with which to pay his creditors. But the laws of 330 A. D. show the influence of better ideas. A wife may be divorced *only* under three conditions: from a murderer, a magician, a violator of tombs. In 340 A. D., adultery is punished as a capital crime. Plato, the heathen philosopher, speaks with despair of the lusts which were eating out the vigor and character of his people. But Justinian's *Christian* code reads, "We enact that all, as far as possible, preserve chastity which alone is able to present the souls of men with confidence before God." Such purity as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, as he exemplified in the case of the woman taken in adultery, recorded in the eighth chapter of John, does not yet prevail even in Bible-favored lands. But that such is the *tendency* of Bible influence, is plain from the contrasts between such lands as Turkey with a false Bible, Brazil with a closed Bible, and England and America with the open Bible.

THE BIBLE AND OUR ANGLO-SAXON ANCESTORS.

To Alfred the Great's Anglo-Saxon "Dooms," embodying the Ten Commandments, we have already referred. They included also the "Golden Rule," and Sunday laws in the interest of the laboring classes. We must content ourselves with this as an introduction to the Bible's influence on our own Saxon forefathers. Which we will also from now on trace, not by written laws, but by actual effects.

Gibbon tells us of the Roman wall of Antoninus, remains of which are still seen near the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. It was built about 55 B. C., to mark the Roman province acquired through Caesar's conquests in Britain. Says the historian, "The people were savages, they took up arms with savage fierceness. They laid them down or turned them towards each other with wild inconstancy, and while they fought singly they were successively subdued." Others write that the natives wore clothing of skins, that their religion was superstition, and they sometimes offered human sacrifices. Hume and Macaulay both confirm this original condition of our forefathers. But the Bible was introduced, and they made great "advances towards the arts and civil manners."

Barbarians from the German forest invaded Britain in the fifth century. They were Angles and Saxons. Below the Britons in civilization, they nearly crushed the Christian religion, and the country *reverted to ancient barbarity*. So says Hume.

600 years after Caesar's day a pious abbot noticed some slaves at auction in the market at Rome. Their fresh complexion and flaxen hair led him to pronounce their names as "angels" rather than "Angles." When he became Pope, as Gregory the Great, he sent missionaries to that fair nation's land. The Gregorian chant in Roman liturgy takes its name from this pope. Of this writes Gibbon in

his fourth volume, pp. 45 and 46: "The rough voices of the barbarians attempted to imitate the melody of the Roman school. Experience had shown him the efficacy of these solemn and pompous rites to soothe distress, to confirm the faith, to mitigate fierceness and dispel the dark enthusiasm of the vulgar." "The conquest of Britain reflects less glory on the name of Caesar, than on the name of Gregory I."

Christianity is certainly the friend of education. The Bible is unmistakably the seed of the school. In the years 529, 799, 813 A. D., church councils ordered the founding of schools. The Council of Trent, in 1545, ordered that the children of the poor have at least one master to teach grammar free. In 796, Theodolphus, under Charlemagne, decreed, "Let the elders found schools through the towns and villages, and if any desire their children to learn liberal studies let them not refuse them." From those early days on, especially since Luther's and Tyndale's day, the bough of education from the Bible root has borne heavily and richly in schools and colleges. *Infidelity has not one such institution to its name.* It attempted one in this country, Girard College, Philadelphia, which for its own internal peace, had finally to seek religious influence.

The Bible has always been closely connected with every marked advance in the world's literature since the Christian era; both itself causing and always keeping fully abreast of such progress. So it was in the days of Alfred the Great, in the ninth century; Wycliffe and Chaucer were cotemporary, in the fifteenth; Tyndale as well as Erasmus was ready to use the Greek language and the printing press; and the Authorized Version was made in 1611, "*the most brilliant century of English literature.*" The Encyclopedia Britannica traces the genealogy of the English language to Wycliffe's Bible of the fourteenth century. Such men as Coleridge and Robert

South look to the Authorized Version for the preservation of pure English. Said South, "He who would not read the Scripture for fear of spoiling his style, shows himself as much a block-head as an atheist."

Let us look inside English books. Shakespeare and Scott abound in Bible quotations and allusions. Such volumes as "Shakespeare and the Bible" and the "Bible in Waverly," are compilations of them. Charles Dickens, when asked where he got his style, said, "Why, from the New Testament, to be sure." To another who charged him with lack of reverence he replied, "I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of our Savior, because I feel it." Joseph Addison is, it is said, remembered even more for his paraphrase of the 19th psalm than for his graceful and perspicuous prose. I need not remind you of Thackeray's, Milton's, Tennyson's and Longfellow's writings, honey-combed with Bible words, pictured with Bible scenes, permeated with Bible truths. Ruskin's mother gave him as a boy, a Bible, marking thirty chapters. Says he, "having learned every syllable accurately, she established my soul in life." George Eliot in "Romola," though an unbeliever, actually confesses to buying a large print Bible in old age, for comfort from its pages.

Let us now turn to *music and art*. We find them equally outspoken in their acknowledgment of Bible influence. The very name "Oratorio" means "place of prayer," and was applied as to-day because such music was first used in Christian religious worship, as ever since confined almost exclusively to Bible subjects. Handel's Messiah was suggested by Isaiah 53, and written with tears. Said the composer, "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself." *Sculpture and painting*: recall the Art Hall at the Columbian Exposition; that statue of Christ's pure manhood protecting the fallen sinner; that life-like representation of

Mary at the Master's feet in the home in Bethany; those scenes of Christian martyrs; think also of Raphael's "Madonna," of his "Transfiguration," while at work on which he was himself translated by death, sweet forerunner of his own transfiguration; recall the "Healing of the Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful;" surely, sculptors and artists have also come under this Book's grand, sweet spell.

Shall we listen to *Orators*? Webster, Bright, Everett, had practices similar to Burke's, of reading a chapter in Isaiah or elsewhere before appearing to speak. "Isaiah possesses both the blaze of eloquence and the light of truth," says Burke.

We will hear true *Christian Science*: Isaac Newton, the discoverer of the law of gravitation, was not the only, but only one among many scientists such as Lord Bacon, David Brewster, Michael Faraday, Sir Humphrey Davy, Jeremiah Horrox, the boy astronomer who first saw the transit of Venus, and James Russell Lowell,—who all fed their souls from this Book of grace, while they developed and delighted their minds with its companion book of nature.

Says Ruskin, "The mission of literature consists in raising our fancy to the height of what may be noble, honest and felicitous in actual life, in giving us, though we may ourselves be poor and unknown, the companionship of the wisest spirits of every age and country," and thus arousing in us higher aspirations. We have heard his opinion of the Bible's influence upon himself; let us listen to the opinions of other prominent witnesses as to its influence on character generally. *As to Freedom*: Horace Greeley, like John Quincy Adams says, "It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people." A gentleman recently reminded me, "The Turks are charging the Christian missionaries with making the Armenian independent." Certainly the Book the Christian missionaries carry, is liable to such an indictment. *As to Morality*:

The grave of an Arctic explorer far up in the regions of perpetual snow, bears this inscription from David's Penitential Psalm, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Ah, this Book that has done so much for us on the outside has an equally wonderful record as to the inside man, the human heart. I shall not give instances, time does not permit. Observation of observing men is more comprehensive and more effective, certainly when they happen to be, at least not partial to the book to which they testify. Says Matthew Arnold, "Of conduct which is more than three-fourths of life, the Bible, whatever people may think or say, is the great inspirer." Thomas Jefferson, "Of all the systems of morality which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus." And Prof. Huxley, "For three centuries this book has been woven into all that is best and noblest in English history."

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

Returning home after years of travel, a motherless young man grieved his Christian father by a contemptuous sneer at the Bible. Without one word of reproach they separated for the night. In the morning he brought his boy the well-worn Bible of his departed mother asking him to read and compare its teachings with his memories of her life. As he did so the son found these words of Scripture underscored and stained with tears. Conviction seized on his heart. He recalled her character, her life, her words. He cast away the temptation to unbelief. He consecrated his talents, of no mean order, to Christ, whose own voice then and there seemed to say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Ah! here is the secret of the Bible's power in the world, *its power in the individual heart*. Let us one and all yield to its truths. It gives loaves and fishes, it gives purity and peace. Let none be satisfied merely to eat of the one, while failing to experience the other.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BIBLE'S HISTORY, OR ITS CONTENTS:

A FINAL EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE AUTHORITY.

Hebrews 2:1:

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

"God hath spoken to us." We will lay down three propositions: A Revelation from God is Possible, is Probable, is an Actual Fact. 1st. That He *could* do so all agree: "With God all things are possible." A Revelation from God *possible*. 2d. With the earliest traces of man we find the desire and expectation that He *would* do so; and the belief that He *had done* so. Hence we conclude it *probable* that He *has* done so. There are seven Bibles in the world to-day; the Koran of the Mohammedans; the Eddas of the Scandinavians; the Try Pitikes of the Buddhists; the Five Kings of the Chinese; the three Vedas of the Hindus; the Zendvesta of the Persians; the Scriptures of the Christians. Thus Scandinavians of the north, Buddhists, Chinese, Hindus of the east, Christians of the west, Jews everywhere, to-day testify to this longing of the human heart for a communication from God. Consider as the expression of this expectation Moses' statement in beginning our race's history, "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden;" "voice," i. e., speech, some expression of sentiment, will, thought, by God to man.

Can there be any nobler desire in the human heart? and is it likely that God who has made provision for all other wants of man, food, clothing, companionship and learning, would fail to meet this? Surely then we may say a Revelation from God *probable*. 3d. "No man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be with him," said Nicodemus to Jesus. Applying these words to the Bible and its effects we argue a Revelation from God has actually been given. For the charge made against the apostle at Thessalonica in the first century, "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also," has continued just through all the advancing ages and spreading society. The same doctrines have spread, and the same radical revolution of society has resulted; though justice compels everyone to say, "turned the world" *right side up*, rather than "upside down." For the change has invariably been for the better. Says Mr. Gibbon, and in this instance not contemptuously, "The new sect of Christians was almost entirely composed of the dregs of the populace, of mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and slaves," but "the friends of Christianity may acknowledge without a blush that many of the most eminent saints have been the most abandoned sinners." Again, "Tertullian with an honest pride could boast that very few Christians had suffered at the hands of the executioner except on account of their religion." For this "reformation of manners which was introduced into the world by the preaching of the Gospel," Mr. Gibbon then proceeds to give some secondary causes, though insinuating that they are the only causes: "I shall slightly mention two motives which might naturally render the lives of the primitive Christians much purer and more austere than those of their pagan cotemporaries or their degenerate successors: *repentance for their past sins*, and the *laudable desire of supporting the reputation of the society in which they were en-*

gaged." But whence this "repentance," whence this "reputation"? He selects as *causes* the very *effects* themselves to be accounted for. We considerably but confidently submit for such reformation of human principles, and through it a reformation of human manners, the explanation to which Nicodemus was forced concerning Jesus: "No book can do these things which the Bible has done except God be with it." A Revelation from God an *actual fact*.

A Revelation *possible*; a Revelation *probable*; a Revelation *actual*. "Therefore we ought to give earnest heed to the things which we have heard;" the things from the prophets, or Old Testament, from the apostles, or New Testament.

The question, what things these are, brings before us the fourth particular view of our general subject, "The Bible's Contents."

We have been occupied with the *external* evidences that the Bible is the book from God; its uninterrupted existence, its incorrupt preservation, its beneficent influence. There is another kind of evidence which these prepare us to expect, which a candid investigation must demand, and a profitable investigation absolutely requires, "The Bible's Internal Matter." We have been looking *upon* the Book; let us now look *within* it.

THE BIBLE'S CONTENTS.

We find it in sixty-six parts, thirty-nine in the Old Testament, twenty-seven in the New;—in the form of history, prophecy, poetry, and dogma; bringing before us the past, the present, and the future; the beginning, continuance and prospect of our race and our earth; its creation, preservation, and redemption,—three majestic pillars of Truth, each grander than the preceding, a glorious climax. Around them we may gather the Bible's Record, Prophecies and Promises of God's dealings with man, and with these we may classify its contents.

ITS RECORD.

Creation: "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth," says Moses. "Without Him was not anything made that was made," says John. "The worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear," we read in the epistle to the Hebrews.

In contrast with this are two other views as to the universe's beginning, both alike, however, in the one idea that *it never had a beginning*. The one is *atheistic*, the other *pantheistic*. No first cause of the universe is needed, because it itself is God. There is no God, but matter has, through an infinite series of existence, in varied forms from all eternity, come to the form in which it is to-day in man, mineral, brute and vegetable,—the result of a merely "fortuitous concourse of atoms."

Here then are the three views of the existence of our race and our earth, between which our minds and our hearts are to judge: It was *accidental*; it is itself *eternal*, and without beginning; it was *designed* by the mind and heart of a Creator. The last is the teaching of the Bible.

Consider the ideas which follow as the necessary effects of these views: Atheism leaves us in the lap of chance: Pantheism reduces God to mere matter: Whereas, Design shows God an intelligent and personal Being; great, good, and good pre-eminently to man.

The earliest religion of the Egyptians was monotheistic, one God. These are some of the recovered teachings of those early days, "The great God, Lord of Heaven and earth, who made all things which are"—"Oh, my God and Lord, who hast made me and formed me, give me an eye to see and an ear to hear thy glories"—a tablet in the British Museum says, "Hail to thee, Terhuti, Lord of Hermopolis, self-existent, without birth, sole god." Beautiful traces are these of

the noble truth from which in Cain's and Babel's day men foolishly departed; and from which the Egyptians in Moses' day had sadly strayed. Says Renouf in substance, the notion that power produces results must lead to one of two ideas; either that there is one *First Cause* from which all others are derived, or one *universal force*, in itself eternal and unchangeable, manifesting itself in different forms. The latter is Pantheism, and prevailed in Egypt at the time of the bondage and exodus of the Israelites. From that age we read *these* words from a hymn on a temple's wall, "The gods salute his royal majesty as their Lord—thou art heaven, thou art earth, thou art fire, thou art water, thou art air, and whatever is in the midst of them." In consequence the people worshipped and were encouraged to worship, not only the emperor, and the river Nile, but even cattle, beetles and frogs. We have to-day the plaster cast of a royal monotheistic reformer in Egypt. But he is called the "heretic king." It was Amenophis IV, who under the influence of his mother, a princess of Mesopotamia, attempted to restore *monotheism* among his subjects in the worship of the solar disc as the God of Light. But he failed utterly, and that though he changed the capital and built a splendid temple at Tel-el-amarna, to establish the new worship. "A few years after his death the national religion was restored, the new capital deserted and the brief reign of truth and art was at an end." And *pantheistic* Egypt sank to be what it is to-day, "the basest of kingdoms," not exercising as much influence in the world as the cruel and despotic, but *monotheistic* Mohammedan Turks.

Moses lays this truth of Monotheism as the foundation stone in the Temple of Light God was erecting for Jews and Gentiles: "In the beginning, *God*."

We cannot stop to consider minutely this first chapter of Genesis. One statement must suffice: and there is not the slightest hesitancy to have it tested: *the conclusions of science strongly confirm the*

account of Moses. This is strikingly true of *this* chapter in contrast with some other passages in the Bible, where we find such expressions as "sun going forth," "sun-rising," four quarters of the earth," though we are firmly and scientifically persuaded that the earth is round and not flat with four quarters, and itself moves around the sun, not the sun around it. Of these some one has said, "The Bible was written not to teach us how the heavens go, but how we go to heaven." Very reasonably, then, in its teaching, it uses expressions of men at large and not those of astronomers and philosophers. But the first chapter of Genesis is strictly scientific, as far as science is able to know. So eminent scientists positively affirm. We can give but one or two particulars as instances. Moses uses two Hebrew words to express the idea of *making*: '*asah*, meaning to make out of something else, *bara*, to make out of nothing. And this latter he uses at exactly those points in the series of existence where Evolution confronts its "missing links," viz., "In the beginning," Gen. 1:1; the appearance of moving creatures, Gen. 1:21; and the appearance of man in the Divine Image, Gen. 1:26. Each of these classes Moses says God *made out of nothing*: and Evolution now lifts her silent testimony to confirm him. Again, the appearance of vegetation *before* animal life, was as scientific as beneficent. The Hypothesis of Laplace being true, our globe as it cooled from a molten to a solid, must have been left surrounded by a vast quantity of carbonic acid gas, death to animal creation unless first taken up by the vegetable, to which it is life. God made the plants first, and then animals and man, thus furnishing them with pure air to breathe, as well as good food to eat.

There are three other truths in these introductory chapters, the first three, of the Bible. God is great and good; but also *near*, *just* and *gracious*. Each of these is found in the account of the "fall" in

Eden; God himself in the garden, *near*; God condemning and punishing sin, *just*; and God promising a Deliverer, *gracious*.

Epicurus of the fourth century B. C., a teacher to whom great numbers flocked from all parts of Greece and Asia Minor, taught that the great evil that afflicted men was Fear, Fear of the gods and of death. To rid men of these two fears was his object. He taught that pleasure is our chief good, explaining, however, "we do not mean the pleasures of the debauchee or sensualist, but freedom of the body from pain and of the soul from anxiety. It is not drinking and revellings that constitute a pleasant life, but sober contemplation that searches out the grounds of choice and avoidance, and banishes those chimeras that harass the mind." His own life, his enemies themselves being judges, was in accord with this idea of pure pleasure, being of the greatest temperance and simplicity. An inscription over the gate of his garden school promised only barley cakes and water to those who might wish to enter. But nevertheless he also taught, "If the means to which sensualists owe their pleasures dispel the anxieties of the mind, and enable them to set limits to their desires, we should have no grounds to blame them for taking their fill of pleasure wherever they could find it, provided it were attended with no pain or grief from any quarter, for that is the only evil." Again, "Injustice is not an evil in itself, but becomes so from the fear that haunts the injurer of not being able to escape the appointed avengers of such acts." And by "avengers" he meant human avengers. For he dispelled the thought of Divine judgment by his doctrine that the gods, as "happy and imperishable beings," could have "*nothing to do with the affairs of the universe, or men.*" The effect of such doctrines is briefly expressed in the word the world has derived from their first teacher's name, *epicurean*, "one devoted to sensual enjoyments, especially one who indulges in the luxuries of the table." "Live while you live, the epicure would say."

Christianity's contrast with this is expressed by Prof. Max Muller's opinion concerning the Bible. He is not generally counted a religionist, yet is an authority of universal acceptance on questions of oriental literature, and prominently of sacred writings. Speaking on the comparative merits of the sacred books of the world, he says, "There is no doubt that ethical teaching is far more prominent in the Old Testament and in the New than in any other sacred book. Therein lies the distinctiveness of the Bible. For instance, in the Veda you get a description of the flood simply as a deluge; in the Old Testament it takes an ethical meaning, it is a punishment and a reward; there is the difference between the two, and that distinction runs through the whole of the sacred books. The Jewish people always referred everything that happened to them to a divine government. They were made to feel that God was angry or pleased," *that God concerns Himself with the universe and with men.*

Such is the teaching of the Bible, here at its very beginning, and all through its pages and ages: *God still interested in this world.* Such is its testimony again and again. Such is the truth standing out as in bas relief on the historical narratives it contains, and such is also the confirmation from *fulfilled* Prophecy to-day, in its marvelous agreement with *spoken* prophecy of Isaiah's, Jeremiah's, Daniel's and Ezekiel's day, 2500 years ago.

ITS PROPHECY.

The prophecies of John in Revelation, concerning the churches at Ephesus, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Smyrna, are read by Mr. Gibbon himself from the facts now existing. To Philadelphia it was promised, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation." Says Mr. Gibbon, "Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or courage among the Greek churches of Asia. Philadelphia is still erect, a column in a scene of ruins."

Wrote Ezekiel of flourishing, wealthy, magnificent Tyre, "I will scrape her dust from off her, and make her like the top of a rock." When Alexander the Great took the city it had been rebuilt on an island a half mile from the main land. "The soil and rubbish were gathered and heaped, and the mighty conqueror cast the ruins of Tyre into the sea," writes one historian. Also, according to Volney's Ruins, to-day, "The whole village of Tyre contains only fifty or sixty families who live on the produce of their little ground and trifling fishery." Another describes Tyre "as a rock, whereon fishers dry their nets."

We might cite other instances of accurately, I might say in many particulars, verbally fulfilled prophecy concerning Babylon, Jerusalem, Damascus. We are all familiar with the answer of William Frederick's chaplain to his request for the shortest possible proof of Christianity, "The Jews, your majesty." This is one practical, effective truth to be drawn from the prophecies in the Bible. Their actual fulfillment furnishes evidence, that, as Nebuchadnezzar declared, "The most high doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and there is none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest thou?" *God actively interested in our race!* The Koran has run this truth into Fatalism. The Bible checks that error by recognizing and insisting upon each individual's free agency and responsibility: Rom. 2:6, "God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life." "In consequence of this, Divine Sovereignty becomes a source of courage and a foundation for quiet and hope. In the stormy times of the Protectorate in England, an official in high position tossed restlessly upon his bed until his valet said, "Pray sir, may I ask you a question? Did not God govern

this world before you came into it,—then can you not trust Him to govern it still?”—“God is dead” was the startling explanation Luther’s wife gave him for appearing at the breakfast table in mourning. It was an original, but effective rebuke to him for giving way to despondency in the work God was using him to do. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,” Prov. 15:3. “Thou God seest me,” Gen. 16:13. “Lo, I am *with* you alway,” Matt. 28:20. But as these last words remind us, the Divine nearness to man is not to *watch* us but to *help* us. This is the other truth of the Eden story, in Genesis 3:15, the text we might say of the whole Bible, *God gracious*—the third of our assumed pillars, Redemption—and the last of our three classes of the Bible’s contents,

ITS PROMISES.

The prophecies are by no means altogether of the punitive character those ancient ruins of the east might imply. Two rabbis, it is related, saw a fox running up the wall of Zion. One wept, because, as he said, “I see what was written in Lamentations fulfilled, ‘Our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim; because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it.’” (Lam. 5:18). “And therefore do I laugh,” said the other, “for when I see God hath fulfilled His threatenings to the letter, I have therein a pledge that not one of His promises shall fail, for He is more ready to show mercy than judgment.” A young boy asked me recently, why Isaiah was called the “fifth Gospel?” You know what my answer was. Though written seven hundred years earlier, it describes many features in Jesus’ life and character, as though it were of the same date with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. *God savingly interested in our race!*

Stoicism, another system of human philosophy, originated with Zeno, and also in the fourth century, B. C. It produced not a

few beautiful characters, the peer of all, perhaps, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Emperor of Rome in the 2d century, A. D. "They held that the universe is governed by one good and wise God, under whom the good are happy—misfortunes happen to the wicked." "It was pointed out how much might still be made of the worst circumstances—poverty, banishment, public odium, sickness, old age. Harmony with the law of the Creator as appearing in His government of the universe, was the ideal character. Pain of every kind, whether from accident or discipline, was to be endured with unmoved patience, as a process which, in the end, would make us perfectly indifferent." The Lacedaemonian youth would endure scourging without complaint. "Seneca" a stoic "taught something closely approaching the Bible doctrine of the corruption of human nature." But Stoicism had no power to lift or encourage man to rise from that corruption. *It could not reveal God as fallen man's Friend.* With this the Bible opens. And as we turn its pages, we find this, like the rising sun, growing steadily brighter until it shines in noon-day splendor, from John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There it glows with light and warmth, truth and love, in its zenith, and from which it will never set.

AS TO MAN.

Another set of truths come before us in these first chapters of Genesis, borne out by the prophets and apostles through the whole Bible. Truths *about man* in beautiful harmony with these *concerning God*, we have been considering. We merely mention them:

Man Spiritual: "In God's image, after God's likeness;" "a living soul;" "among the beasts no help found meet for him." Another of the errors Epicurus left to his followers was materialism, man has no soul. A fact which explains the disgrace they brought

upon his name. They who believe they are only animals, will, with the rarest exception, live like animals, restrained, if at all, merely by civil law.

Man Fraternal: "Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." The words *rival* and *river* are strangely related in origin, though now so different in meaning. The explanation is that the Romans regarded every tribe an enemy, if separated from them but by a river, and so called them rivals. Juvenal asks, "How a slave can be a man?" Seneca, the stoic, said a slave had no hearth nor religion. True, a stoic also taught, "Cum jure omni liberi nasceruntur juri gentium servitas invasit." "Everyone is justly born free; slavery has usurped the right of the race." But Stoicism was unequal to the task of restoring that right. The sciences of philology and ethnology, the studies of languages and nations, are steadily confirming the teaching of Genesis, that the human race is one through common parents, one explanation of the influence the Bible has in all ages exerted in steadily though slowly pushing slavery from the earth.

Man Sinful: This needs no comment. Not only all religions, but all hearts know it; all lives show it. The Bible's peculiarity on this point is in the course it pursues to help us—not by rites and ceremonies on the outside, on the body, but by a Divine work on the inside, on the heart: "Ye must be born again." It makes us *helpless*, in order to make us *hopeful*.

Man Immortal: Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, renowned for his virtues, asked, "How can it be that the gods, who have arranged all things well and benevolently, have over-looked this, that some good men, pious, most intimate with the divinity, when they have once died, should never exist again?" He bows to the will of the gods in either case, saying, "What a soul that is, which is ready at any moment either to be extinguished, or dispersed, or continue to exist." He charges Christians with obstinacy in their asserted assurance

of the future life. Socrates reasoned about it; Marcus Aurelius hoped for it; Jesus Christ "brought immortality to light." And there were growing intimations all through the Old Testament even before Christ's day. Moses writes of Enoch, only two chapters after the fall, "He was not, for God took Him." Elijah was translated. David was confident he should "go to his child." Job was confident that "in his flesh he should see God." Immortality, not with the idea of transmigration into animals of higher or lower grade, not with the sense of absorption into the Divine, as the Stoic taught, but with the assurance of *preserved personality*,—in this sense immortality awakens in man self-respecting nobility, carries home to him personal accountability, and holds out to him a glorious possibility.

To such an offer of eternal happiness Mr. Gibbon ascribes the conversion of "great numbers in the Roman empire." Who could doubt it?

This, remember, is the third and grandest doctrine of the Bible, REDEMPTION. It is *the* object of the Book. We find the first dawn of it in Genesis, and from that on it steadily rises higher and brighter until we are brought face to face with the Redeemer himself, "*God manifest in the flesh.*" The character of Jesus Christ is the most striking peculiarity of the whole Book. The mythology of Greece and the legends of Asia, show that the idea of "God coming down in the likeness of men," was not unknown in the world. But their assertions are but idle tales and boastful talk, in comparison with the character of Jesus, actually lived among and before men. The loftiest minds of antiquity never conceived of such a character, so perfectly human, yet perfectly divine, in whom every attribute is perfect, and not one extreme; both zealous and serene, bold and prudent, wise and guileless, severe and tender, grandly dignified and kindly humble, conscious of belonging to a purer world, yet not living like an ascetic or a stoic in this. Says the infidel, Thomas Jefferson, "these could not be the inventions of the grovel-

ling authors who relate them, they show that there was a character, the subject of their history." The express image of the Father's person, and the express declaration of the Father's love; in the world to bring the world, by suffering for it, back to the Eternal Father of all! This is the only explanation of Jesus Christ, and the one he gives of himself: "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Thus have we endeavored to sum up the truths taught in this beautiful, marvelous, and mighty Book: God made us, God cares for us, God came into our world to save us. "Twere well to die if there be gods, and sad to live if there be none," beautifully, though sadly, exclaimed the noble heathen Marcus Aurelius. But the Bible leaves us with no tantalizing "if." Its simple truths transform "life, death and that vast forever into one grand, sweet song." God is; and God is great, good, and *graciously* good to fallen man.

At Lahore, India, in the Brahmo Somaj, the Brahmins have given the Bible a place with the Koran, the Vedas, and the Try Pitikes of Buddhism. But in our hearts we give it alone the throne. We make it the foundation of our hopes. And in answer to any appeal to share our allegiance among the others, we must apply the words of Peter to Him of whom the Bible tells, "To what Book should we turn but unto this? It has the words of everlasting life." Our heads and hearts alike we yield.

THE BIBLE IS THE BOOK FROM GOD AND DECLARES THE WILL OF GOD FOR OUR SALVATION!

May the prophet's words setting forth the Savior, express also the growing experience both of the author and of each reader, "I delight to do thy will, O God." And learn from the Saviour, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." John, 6:29.

THE END.

Princeton Theological Seminary Library



1 1012 01597 5347

